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## 'Being a Tourist in (my own) Home': Negotiating Identities and Belonging in Indonesian Heritage Tourism

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## *Chapter Seven*

### *{Identity, Mobility, Embodiment}*

#### **"Being a Tourist in My (Own) Home"**

##### *Negotiating Identity between Tourism and Migration in Indonesia*

Kathleen M. Adams

When I was an anthropology graduate student in the 1980s, my introduction to Edward Bruner's scholarship centered not on tourism, but on his contributions to the study of ethnicity, migration, and cultural performances in Indonesia. Although most readers of this volume will associate Bruner's name with his constructivist tourism research, when I was setting out to Indonesia to conduct fieldwork on tourism, art, and identity politics in the early 1980s, he had yet to turn his lens to tourism. However, the creative interplay between mobility, intergroup encounters, and identity was already a recurrent and fruitful theme in Bruner's writings, and it was this pretourism work that inspired my own approach to understanding and conceptualizing the politics of tourism in eastern Indonesia. This chapter showcases how Bruner's foundational work on these three analytical issues (mobility, intergroup encounters, and identity) is extended in my current research on Toraja migrant return visits to their ancestral homeland in the highlands of Sulawesi, Indonesia.

More specifically, this chapter examines the encounters, performances, and emotional experiences of different generations of Toraja migrants during their travels to the Toraja homeland. Toraja migrant returns are often inspired by desires to reunite with local kin or to partake in familial rituals, particularly funerals and ancestral house celebrations. Yet these visits generally also entail touristic activities and performances. Both touristic and kin encounters in the ancestral homeland tend to prompt reflections on self and the other. At the core of these reflections are narratives pertaining to identities, as well as struggles over contrasting meanings and understandings of various dimensions of Toraja identity (whether kin-based, spiritual, or newly emerging regional forms of identity).

Contrasting understandings of identity embraced by different parties involved in borderzone spaces is a recurrent motif in Bruner's tourism- and

identity-oriented work (E. Bruner 1986b; 1991; 2005a). However, my aim here is to illustrate how a Bruner-inspired approach spotlighting the complex encounters, narratives, and performances pertaining to diaspora travelers and tourists can offer new insights into the processes of identity and kinship negotiation that are part and parcel of heritage tourism. A subsidiary theme in this chapter entails extending these identity-oriented explorations into the cyber era, examining how social media has given rise to new genre spaces for far-flung Torajas to engage in cyber-touristic identity-oriented explorations (K. Adams 2015a). Bruner's work with Indonesian migrants set the stage for questions that are at the heart of my current research.

### **TOYING WITH ETHNIC IDENTITY IN TOURISTIC SPACES: FROM MIGRANT BATAKS TO MIGRANT TORAJAS**

As I outlined in an earlier chapter (this volume), Bruner's long-term research on Batak migrants in ethnically diverse Indonesian cities led him to chronicle the activities of Batak visitors at Jakarta's Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park. His broader aim was to tease out some of the identity-oriented paradoxes of flagship ethnic theme parks in several different countries (E. Bruner 2005d). Indonesia's ethnic theme park was born in an era of intense nation building and was designed to promote unity in diversity. (Indonesia is a multiethnic island nation with multiple religious groups, in which Muslim Javanese form the political and demographic majority population). As Bruner and others have speculated, an underlying aim of Indonesia's Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park was to deemphasize ethnicity and reframe subnational identities in terms of provincial borders and national orientations.<sup>1</sup> Thus one of the park's (then-) twenty-six provincial pavilions showcases Batak traditional architecture and cultural arts alongside the traditional architecture of other groups from the same province. However, Bruner's observations of Jakarta Batak families making recreational weekend visits to the park demonstrated that despite the park's design to emphasize provincial and national identity, these aspects of social identity are not salient to their visits. Rather, Jakarta-based migrant Toba Bataks celebrate and create their own versions of ethnic identity via their activities in the Batak area of the park, which stands in as a surrogate for the homeland. In short, these urban Bataks who grew up far from the ancestral homeland recreationally toy with ethnic identity in a touristic space in which they are "simultaneously the tourists and the toured" (2005d, 227).

Having visited the Batak display at the park and having made similar observations of Toraja visitors at the Toraja section of the South Sulawesi pavilion, I found the antiseptic feel of these ethnic displays striking. The

Batak domestic tourists Bruner observed explored their ethnic identity and heritage through a sanitized and distanced version of their homeland. In this at-a-distance setting, idealized ethnic identities seldom have occasion to clash with the familial and clan identities given preeminence in the Batak homeland. Nor do urban Batak visitors to the park's Batak ethnic house encounter the same kind of disorienting assault of the senses that they might experience at a ritual in the homeland.

My own research with another Indonesian ethnic group follows different generations of Toraja migrants on their return homeland trips to address the question of what happens identity-wise when tourist/migrant-returnees vacation in the "unsanitized" homeland. How are at-a-distance idealized conceptions of identity and heritage enacted, reframed, or renarrativized? That is, how are ideas about self and other, home and not-home renegotiated in the context of these return visits? I turn now to discuss my ongoing work on these issues. Similar to Bruner's (1999) opening in his article on Batak migrants' relationship to their ancestral villages, which entails an account of his return to his Sumatran fieldwork site after a forty-year absence, I begin with a story about my own return, after an absence of five years, to the Indonesian village where I had worked.

## TOURING ANCESTRY

In the summer of 2012, I returned to the Toraja highlands in Indonesia to attend the funeral of the Toraja woman in whose home I had lived on and off since the 1980s, when I began my long-term research in the region (see K. Adams 2006). This was the first time I had my husband and child (ten years old at the time) in tow, and I naively envisioned this visit more as a personal homage to my surrogate Toraja kin than as a foray down a new research path.

We arrived in the village ten days before the funeral, within hours of two other far-flung relatives of the deceased—a Toraja migrant and her Canadian-reared teenage daughter. Family members wasted no time in ushering us to the ancestral house to pay respects to my late fieldwork "mother," Sindo' Toding, who lay at rest in a lovingly tended coffin. Next we were escorted to the front of the family's ancestral house for a portrait with Sindo' Toding's partially finished, carved effigy (the latest in a long series of portraits with Sindo' Toding and family members taken on each of my returns). Finally, we all trudged down the bamboo-lined footpath to the cliffside village graves so the "American kin" visiting for the first time could meet and greet the effigies of other deceased relatives. The following day my adoptive fieldwork brother opened the family museum-cum-heirloom storehouse to offer my husband



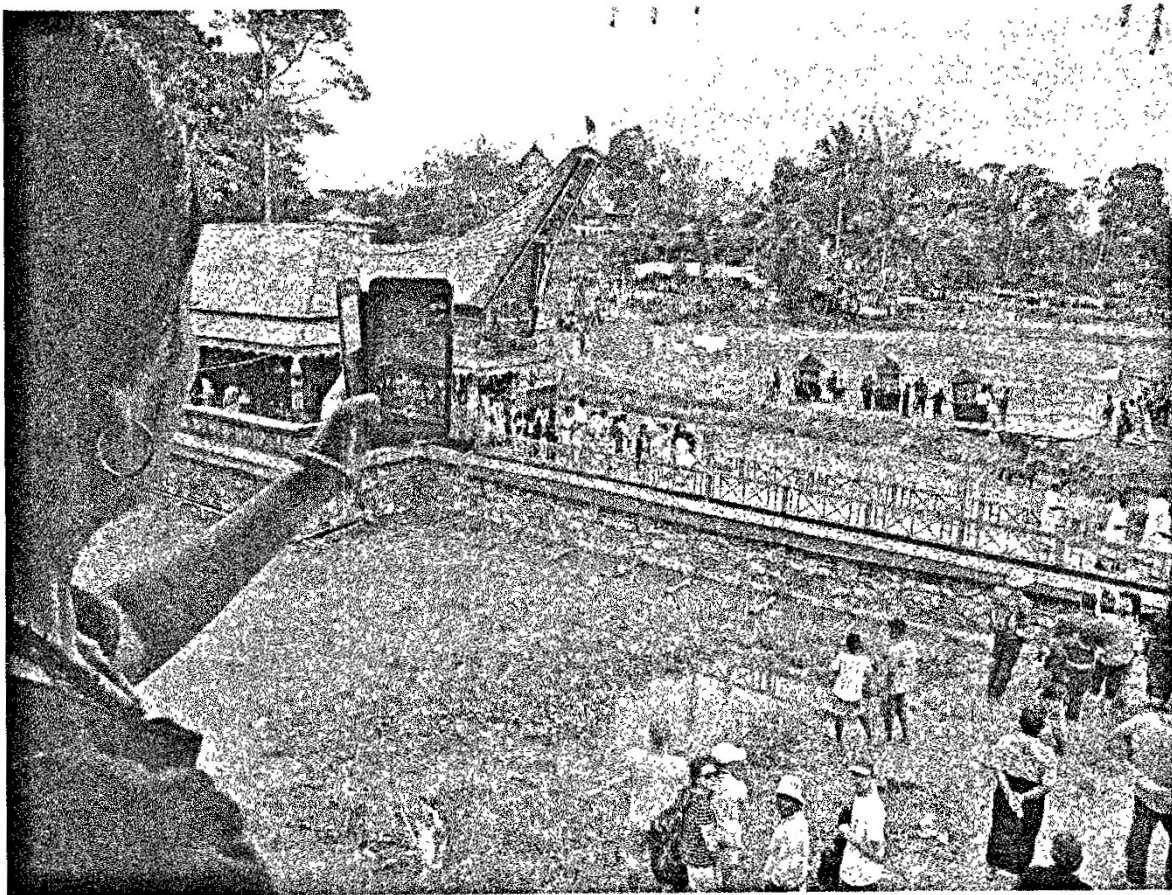
and daughter what I later realized was an object-centered lesson in Toraja heritage. As I subsequently learned, the Toraja migrant and her Canadian-reared daughter's welcome mirrored ours.

Over the next few days, despite the pressing demands of preparing for the arrival of thousands of funeral guests, my surrogate Toraja kin orchestrated an unexpected series of activities for both the Canadian Toraja migrant family and my own family. One day, they whisked our families off on a mountain road trip, making stops for Toraja coffee and group portraits at scenic overlooks and graves. On another day, our hosts insisted our families join their entourage at a kinsman's funeral, so that the North American kin visiting for the first time "could experience a Toraja funeral." There, we perched on rice barn platforms and feasted while resident relatives introduced local and return-migrant kin and offered periodic tutorials on ritual protocol. The first-time visitors had all heard accounts of Toraja funerals from their Toraja parents, yet had not anticipated the novel sensory experiences: navigating the sticky, mud-coated ritual terrain while wearing sarongs; sitting a stone's throw from squealing pigs with foaming mouths and wriggling bound legs awaiting ritual slaughter; breathing air thick with cigarette smoke mingled with the musky stench of animal blood; and gingerly sampling (and sometimes savoring) unfamiliar foods (figure 7.1).



**Figure 7.1.** A guest reception procession navigates a muddied path bordered by pigs awaiting slaughter at a Toraja funeral.

Photo credit: Kathleen M. Adams.



**Figure 7.2.** A Toraja returning migrant-tourist photographing a funeral ritual.

Photo credit: Kathleen M. Adams.

Our languid afternoon at that funeral was periodically punctuated by the master of ceremony's crackling loudspeaker announcements, the Protestant pastor's sermon, bumbling attempts to sing from Toraja-language hymnals, and rearranging ourselves for flurries of group and selfie shots snapped by both local and returning migrant kin. Weeks later, back in Chicago, I discovered many of these selfie shots and portraits, along with others taken during Sindu Toding's funeral, posted on the Facebook pages of migrant Toraja kin who had also returned for the ritual. One image in particular anchored itself in my mind and ultimately prompted a new course of research. It bore the caption "Being a tourist in my (own) home." Up until that point, my tourism-oriented research in the Toraja highlands had always focused on either foreign tourists or domestic tourists. However, sharing tours with returning diaspora Toraja kin and reading the visiting migrant's Facebook caption prompted the realization that I had missed an important cohort of people with complex relationships to the Toraja homeland that necessitated further attention.

In the Indonesian context, a rich, insightful anthropological literature on sociocultural issues pertaining to mobile persons has emerged; however, the overarching trend has been to spotlight either migrants or tourists, be they

domestic or international.<sup>2</sup> To the best of my knowledge, Indonesian migrants returning to their ancestral homelands as tourists have yet to be the focus of extended study.<sup>3</sup> This is surprising, given that a variety of factors have prompted mushrooming numbers of Indonesian migrants to visit their ancestral homelands in recent decades, including the growth of budget airlines, the expansion of Indonesian destination marketing, and the promotion of ethnic homeland festivals on migrant-oriented social media pages.<sup>4</sup>

The Indonesian tourism ministry and industry approaches may be partially to blame for long eclipsing this cohort of mobile persons, as only two statistical categories exist in Indonesia: domestic tourists and international tourists. Likewise, Western academic biases surrounding our conceptual categories of tourists have contributed to a disproportionate emphasis on the ramifications of foreign tourism and while little attention is paid to migrants now returning to their ethnic homelands as tourists. As Tim Winter, Peggy Teo, and T. C. Chang observe, “the paradigm of tourism has in large part been constructed around an analysis of West-to-East, North-to-South encounters.” In much of the scholarly literature, “our tourist has been silently conceived of as white (and male)” (2009, 5). Tim Winter (2009), Erik Cohen (2015), and others have underscored the need to decenter and decolonize the study of tourism in Asia by focusing on traveling Asians.

Since the late 1990s there has been some momentum in this direction within Indonesian studies. For instance, Shinji Yamashita (2003) has produced a nuanced study of female Japanese tourists who marry Balinese men they met while vacationing in Indonesia, and additional scholars (Pemberton 1994; K. Adams 1998; Hitchcock 1998) have turned their lenses toward various aspects of domestic tourism in Indonesia’s ethnic theme parks. However, with the possible exception of Bruner’s (2005d) aforementioned examination of domestic Batak tourists visiting Batak displays at Jakarta’s Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park as a surrogate for their homeland, to the best of my knowledge, the activities of migrant-tourists visiting their Indonesian ancestral homelands are only beginning to attract scholarly attention.

The remainder of this chapter has three aims. First, I sketch some of the landscape of different generations of Toraja migrants’ experiences on their return visits to their ancestral homeland. I am particularly interested in the ways in which these returning Torajas forge connections to their place of ancestry; that is, I examine how they engage with, react to, and emotionally process the peoples, places, and activities they encounter during the course of their visits. Ultimately, my broader research project is to achieve a better understanding of the ways in which migrants’ visits to homelands may shift, challenge, or reaffirm sensibilities about their own identities.



In considering travel's relationship to aspects of migrants' identities, it is not my intention to advance a conception of ancestral homeland travel as a process that simply reaffirms returnees' irreducible, primordial identities. Rather, like Bruner and others, I embrace a constructivist conception of identity as always in the process of being formulated, challenged, affirmed, rethought, and remade. A return to a familial homeland can serve as a potent vehicle for questioning, reassessing, enacting, and articulating we–they relationships or contrasting sets of identities (see K. Adams 2016).

Nonetheless, it is valuable to underscore that in the special case of ancestral homeland travel, these we–they relationships are all the more complicated and involuted, as my Toraja migrant friend's Facebook comment about "being a tourist in my (own) home" suggests. As Shaul Kelner observes in his recent book on Jewish Americans' experiences on Israeli birthright tours:

Homelands are gazed on not solely as a signifier of the Other, but also as a signifier of the Self. They hold out the promise of encountering difference within similarity, as well as similarity in spite of difference. In this dialectic resides homeland tourism's power as a locus for meditation on the meanings of diasporic identities. (Kelner 2010, 10)

The second theme I highlight in this chapter concerns the ironies and disconnects entailed in these homeland visits. The various generations of Toraja migrants I interviewed generally expressed longings, nostalgia, and pride in their ancestral culture, yet more often than not, their trips to pay homage to the homeland revealed either the superficiality of their cultural understandings, or disconnects between their perspectives and those of their locally based kin. These disconnects were particularly apparent with second- and third-generation Torajas visiting the ancestral homeland, reminiscent of the sharp contrast between African-American diaspora tourists' understandings of Ghana and those of local Ghanaians (E. Bruner 1996a). (As Bruner observed, African-American diaspora tourists tended to see Ghana as a stand-in for "Mother Africa" whereas local Ghanaians approached the African-American visitors as "white foreigners." Moreover, these visitors envisioned the Cape Coast castles and their dungeons as sacred ancestral sites of suffering, whereas Ghanaians tended to see these structures as more multifaceted sites with long and varied histories.) These differing perspectives engendered tensions and what Bruner termed "struggles over meanings" as Ghanaians sought to use their castles in ways that diaspora tourists deemed disrespectful. Although the Toraja migrants touring their homeland are only a generation or two removed, their visits can prompt similar disconnects, tensions, and struggles over meanings.

This brings me to the third theme, which pertains to the emotional terrain of Toraja migrant ancestral homeland visits. Bruner was ahead of most tourism scholars in recognizing the salience of the emotional realm in touristic experiences. This chapter draws inspiration from Bruner's attentiveness to emotions and meaning-making, and from more recent scholarship on the interplay between the realm of the senses and meaning-making in tourist spaces.<sup>5</sup> Crouch and Desforges (2003, 11) suggest that in attending to visitors' sensory engagements with locales we can gain unique insights into "issues such as subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, expressivity and emotion, memory and imagination." Writing about international tourists' travels to locales perceived to be ancestral homelands, Naomi Leite also stresses the importance of "sensing the past," observing that "sensory engagement is so effective because it is imaginatively experienced as being *the same* as that of one's own ancestors" (Leite 2005, 286–87, italics in original). She further notes that these tourists' sensory experiences in such destinations enable many to navigate across the eras of their displacement to an imagined past, thereby reframing their understandings of their own present-day identities and fostering a newfound connection to a "home"-place (2005, 297).

The Toraja returning migrant-tourists I write of here share much with the diaspora tourists Leite describes, in terms of the role of sensory experiences in shaping their understandings of their identities during and after these travels to the homeland. However, a key difference is that many of these Toraja homeland tourists are returning to villages in which they or their parents were reared. Their ties to these sites (and the kin that occupy them) are direct, yet the memories evoked by anticipated trips home are often selective, and they themselves have changed since their initial departures. Many return anticipating the pleasurable tastes and smells of longed-for homeland foods, the sustaining embraces of much-missed village kin, and the soothing breezes and memory-laden landscapes of youth. Others return dreading the financially and emotionally weighty burdens and entanglements of ancestral rituals. Yet, despite their direct ties to these destinations and their anticipated experiences, the emotional and sensory terrains they encounter on these homeland trips are not always as anticipated.

Here, I argue that the bodily and sensory experiences of Toraja migrants in their ancestral homeland visits entail cominglings of attraction and revulsion and foster potent feelings of ambivalence.<sup>6</sup> As some of the case studies in this chapter illustrate, ambivalence is a frequent yet underexplored theme in the narratives and comments of returning migrant-tourists.<sup>7</sup> I suggest that by examining emotionally charged, multisensual encounters with homeland kin, objects, foods, and animals we can gain more nuanced insights into how



migrant visitors to their own or their parents' homelands feel their way to unique understandings concerning heritage and familial, ethnic, spiritual, and other identities.

## THE TORAJA IN THE ZOOM LENS

Whereas Bruner's ethnographic research is heavily oriented toward the perspectives of visitors and other cultural interlopers (such as guides, anthropologists, and travel brokers), my research draws from insights culled from long-term ethnographic work amongst the Sa'dan Toraja, whose homeland is in the mountainous, predominantly rural interior of the island of Sulawesi. The Toraja are a largely Christian minority group in a predominantly Muslim nation. Over 750,000 Torajas reside in their homeland, and an equal number of first-, second-, and third-generation Torajas reside elsewhere, working or studying on other Indonesian islands or abroad. Toraja migration began in the 1970s, and over time remittances from migrants contributed to tremendous inflation in the cost and scale of rituals, as the more successful first-generation migrants funneled their familial status-enhancement efforts into cosponsoring elaborate, pageantry-filled funeral and house-consecration rituals in their homeland (K. Adams 2006; 2015a; Volkman 1985).

Funerals and other rituals not only draw first-generation migrants and their children back to the highlands, they also draw tourists: Toraja villages, rituals, and burial sites have been promoted for touristic consumption since the 1980s (K. Adams 2006). By the mid-1990s, roughly 50,000 international tourists and 200,000 domestic tourists were visiting annually (these figures include many returning migrant visitors with their families). Arrivals plummeted in the late 1990s and early 2000s due to a series of political, economic, and health crises in Indonesia. Thus, in 2006 government officials began developing initiatives aimed at attracting Toraja migrants and their families to return for homeland visits. Today, tourism to the highlands is recovering: in 2016 Northern Toraja Regency<sup>8</sup> alone received over 50,000 domestic tourists and over 60,000 foreign tourists, figures that reportedly included thousands of migrant Torajas returning for rituals, visits, and state-sponsored homecoming festivals (Kantor Statistik Toraja Utara).

Returning to the ethnographic material, I begin with a discussion of the diversity of returning migrant-tourists and the range of factors that can color migrant experiences on their homeland visits. Then I showcase three themes: the ironies and disconnects entailed in migrants' visits, the emotional and

bodily aspects of their visits, and the ways in which return visits shift, challenge, or reaffirm visitors' sensibilities about identities and heritage. Although artificially separated, these themes are, in actuality, intertwined.

## DIVERSE MIGRANT EXPERIENCES

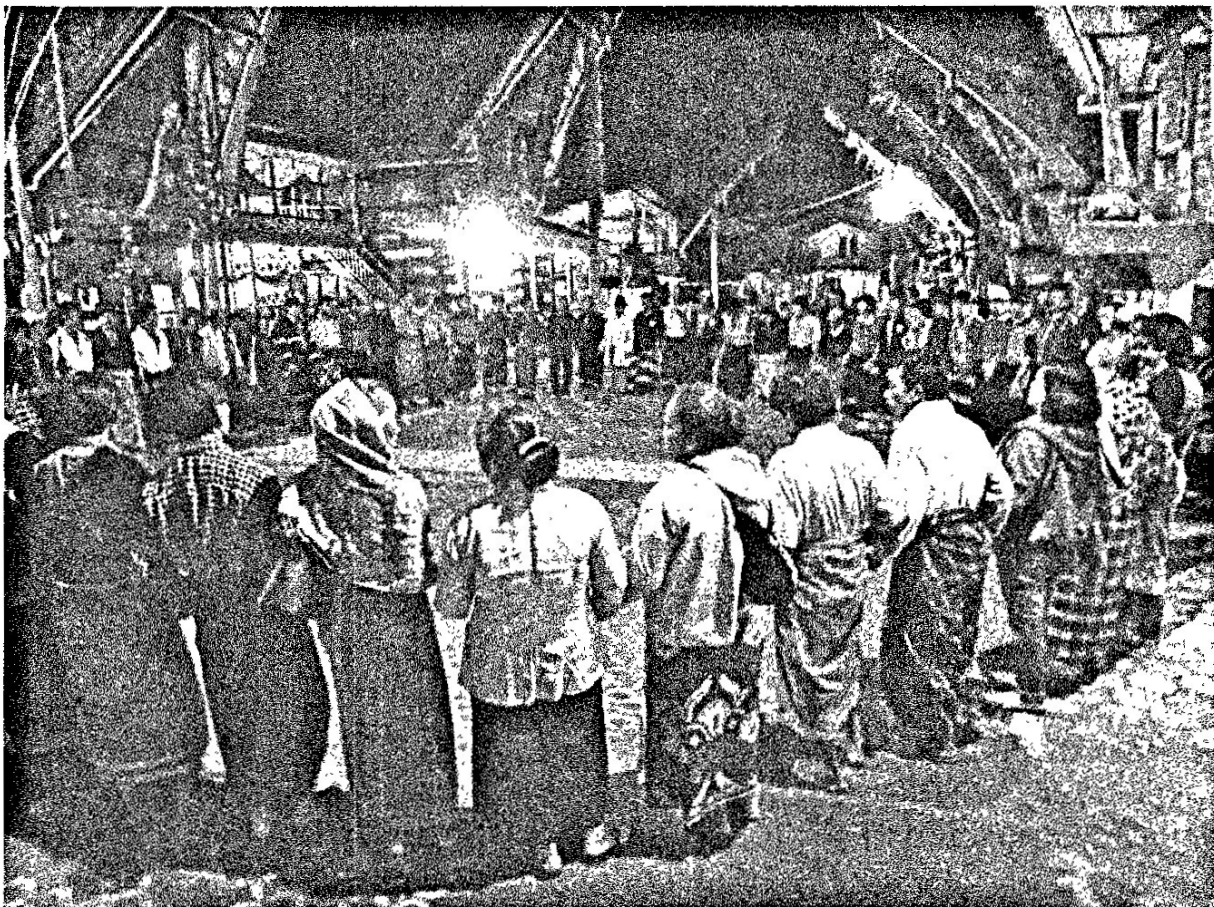
For some first- and second-generation migrants, poverty and geographical distance render return visits to the homeland challenging, if not impossible. Some second- and third-generation migrants have no direct contact with the homeland, though they may signal emotional connection to their heritage or ethnic pride by decorating their homes with Toraja textiles and carvings, or by joining Toraja-oriented Facebook groups. Others with closer kinship ties and enough income to cover the costs of bus trips and flights may make return trips once every few years, staying with local kin. Still others with more means—especially successful first-generation migrants—own grand second homes in the highlands and may return several times a year, sometimes with children and grandchildren in tow. In short, class and wealth intersect with migrants' experiences on their highland visits in various ways.

In terms of motives for ancestral homeland visits, all of the Toraja migrants I interviewed—wealthy or poor, first- or second-generation—underscored that they do not return to the highlands exclusively for tourism: rather, they return for rituals, to visit kin, to introduce their spouses and children to their cultural legacy, or to nourish longings for the homeland. While there, however, these first- and second-generation migrants combine those activities with visits to tourist sites. One construction worker living in East Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) told me, “We all feel homesickness. Like me, I’ve been away working (*merantau*) for thirty-five years. My wife is from Kalimantan, we’ve got five kids, and my whole family has already been to Toraja. Even my kids often return home to Toraja on holiday (*pulang berlibur*).” Another first-generation Toraja migrant working in Gabon’s oil industry explained, “If I go home, I often visit tourist attractions there. I’m proud to be a son of Toraja soil. And, yeah, I also gulp in family (*men(j)eguk keluarga*), too.”<sup>9</sup>

Comparing the typical experience of a wealthier Toraja migrant visiting the homeland with that of a migrant of ordinary means offers a glimpse into how migrants' financial status can color their physical or somatic experiences of the ancestral homeland. At present, when returning to see kin, attend rituals, and make pilgrimages to celebrated touristic sites, most Toraja first- and second-generation migrants of ordinary or more limited means reside with relatives, either in their rural homes or in specially constructed bamboo pavilions while attending funerals. There, they share food with their local kin,

join in the rhythmic, melancholy *ma'badong* mortuary dances, and partake in playful banter while taking and posting selfies with village relatives, until the electronically amplified funeral music and chattering of the crowds die down enough for them to collapse, sardine-style, for a few hours of fitful sleep on mats or shared mattresses. After as long as ten days of sharing intimate space with local relations, despite physical discomforts, returning migrants told me of what one might describe as passing moments of *communitas* with local relatives and a sense of being in the fold of their ancestral culture. (See figure 7.3.)

In contrast, more affluent returning migrants and their children are accustomed to more comfortable urban households and less enchanted by the prospect of temporarily residing at a funeral site. They frequently express ambivalence about foregoing creature comforts to sleep alongside others on plaited mats in cramped funeral pavilions, trudging through mud spattered with sacrificial animal blood to queue for showers in semipublic settings. For some, especially second-generation migrants, these alien sensory experiences trigger powerful feelings of ambivalence and even revulsion. Many of the



**Figure 7.3.** Visiting migrant kin partake in a late-night funeral dance with their Toraja hosts.

Photo credit: Kathleen M. Adams.

more prosperous visiting migrants are prone to flee the crowds, acrid smells, and general discomforts of their kinspeople's funerals as soon as they can politely do so. As one wealthy Toraja migrant confided, after spending several hours each day at a rural funeral, he and his family "run away" to slumber in the cushioned comfort of lodges and hotels in the provincial capital. In short, the bodily experiences of these wealthier return migrants underscore a central irony: while they may be in their ancestral home, they are not at home.

### THE WEIGHT OF HERITAGE: THE SOMATIC DIMENSION

Rante's story further illustrates the powerful role of the senses and bodily experiences in nourishing potent, visceral senses of connection to and disconnection from heritage. Rante is a second-generation Toraja migrant of aristocratic descent who was reared in Sulawesi's provincial capital. Most of the time when her parents returned to the highlands to visit kin, she opted to stay at home. As she tells me, "I grew up without knowing my culture. All I know is that Torajas have to sacrifice water buffalo when a relative dies, but I don't even know why." After graduating from the university, she met an American online, and they ultimately married. They settled in the United States and now have a young child. She once brought her husband and child to Sulawesi, and while there they visited kin and toured the Toraja highlands. She describes, with palpable euphoria, her experiences there of eating long-pined-for Toraja dishes. The tastes and textures of Toraja delicacies unobtainable elsewhere—fatty pig cooked in earthy black *pemerasan* (a tree pod seasoning) and fiery soup with gummy taro balls, greens, and chopped peanuts (*pogallu*)—transported her back in time to the nostalgic realm of childhood memories. It was through the sensations of taste and texture that she, quite literally, felt her heritage.

Yet this was not the case for her foreign-born child and husband. Her son wailed at the sight of ritual water buffalo sacrifices and sobbed incessantly when presented with buffalo meat thereafter. Still, she told me with a proud smile that her son relished pork, alluding to how Toraja sensibilities about ethnicity include a shared passion for pork—a powerful cultural identity marker in a Muslim country. Her American husband struggled with Toraja's spicy food and groaned about his incessant "Bali belly"<sup>10</sup> through much of the visit. In short, Rante and her family's contrasting bodily experiences pertaining to food offer a glimpse into the ways in which visceral experiences can nourish deep connections with place and ancestry for one generation while fueling revulsion in the next. Through this case we can also see how bodily



experiences while on ancestral homeland visits can expose generational and cultural rifts within families.

For some second-generation Toraja visitors, a return to the homeland can prompt a different kind of sensory engagement with ancestors and heritage, an engagement that is not food-, people-, or animal-oriented, but more ephemeral. Elsi is a gregarious second-generation Toraja migrant in her mid-thirties. Elsi's parents, both Toraja aristocrats, left the homeland before she was born. They moved to Makassar and then to the United States to pursue higher degrees. When her parents returned to Makassar, Elsi stayed on for college and ultimately married a North American. When her father passed away earlier this year, she returned with her two young children to assist her mother with the funeral arrangements in the highlands. Between funeral activities, Elsi's brother and cousins whisked them off to see various tourist sites, all the while tutoring them in new, culturally prescribed ways of physically engaging with the landscape. On one occasion, they took Elsi and her children on a hike up Singki Hill overlooking North Toraja Regency's capital town of Rantepao. The aim was to visit a newer tourist site that had been erected in 2008. The site, which consists of an enormous cross and a large set of letters spelling out "Rantepao" (evocative of the Hollywood sign) is also an ancestral burial area. As Elsi told me,

Walking up the stairs, we passed the ancient graves saying *tabe* (excuse me). *Tabe* is a kind of respect to the dead when passing their graves. Others believe that if you spit on the ground or just take a leak, you must say *tabe*. Even the sound of cars or motorcycles honking is [a way of saying] *tabe* [on the road]. On our walk back down, my cousin told us to say *tabe* many times because you don't want to be followed by ghosts (*Kunti Lanak*). My brother and cousin once went up with a group of tourists. The journey which took up fifteen to twenty minutes took them an hour or more. They felt something very heavy on their feet.

Elsi's local cousins shared many frightening Toraja ghost stories with them during their visit, and she found herself periodically having strange sensations. She recounted how they visited another new tourist site but abruptly stopped on their way up the freshly paved path as she suddenly experienced an eerie feeling while passing a thick cluster of greenery and bamboo. Her cousin then told her that a man had hung himself at that spot. Elsi also described how, the entire time she was in the highlands, people repeatedly told her they had seen her father's spirit, and she kept experiencing these strange feelings. Elsi's story illustrates how, for some second-generation Torajas, the highlands become a place where one can somatically experience the ancestors, where past and present merge through these sorts of embodied experiences.



## THE WEIGHT OF HERITAGE: HOUSE-BASED FAMILIES, MIGRANTS, AND CLASHES OVER MEANING

Turning to the Bruner-inspired ethnographic strategy of unpacking clashes and disconnects between visitors and locals, I detour momentarily to offer background on the Toraja family structure. Despite seemingly familiar surface contours, Toraja family and social organization differ markedly from our own. Roxana Waterson (2003) has observed that Toraja social organization meshes with Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of a "house society"—that is, a society in which kinship organization derives from named houses founded by ancestors. In house societies, ancestral houses are not only the key sites of ritual activity; they also own property and confer titles and duties. The Toraja ancestral house is intimately entwined with how people conceptualize familial identity.<sup>11</sup> In the broadest sense, Torajas call these origin houses *banua pa rapuan* (people who can trace their descent to a common ancestor constitute a *rapu*). The touristically celebrated, elaborately carved Toraja *tongkonan* is but one type of *banua pa rapuan*, associated with the nobility.

Each Toraja can claim membership in various family origin houses. Some of these ancestral houses are older, carry illustrious pedigrees, and are more prestigious than others. Less hallowed ancestral houses tend to be those that were more recently established, splintering off from the grander parent houses. One acquires one's house affiliations through both male and female parents and affines, and even more distant kin. These affiliations endure provided that one maintains ritual duties to the *tongkonan*, contributes funds to house consecrations, and repays prior generations' ritual debts by gifting water buffalo, which may cost tens of thousands of dollars, at funerals for house-based kin. Torajas' sense of house-based familial identity is so entrenched that Torajas encountering one another for the first time when far from the homeland frequently inquire as to each other's house affiliations (K. Adams 2015b).

Toraja sensibilities about obligations to family-origin houses also encompass protection of familial honor (*longko*). As Waterson observes, "*longko*" can refer as much to feelings of shame in relation to other family members, as to feelings between families. . . . [These] feelings are equally elicited by a sense of one's failure to do the right thing, especially if one then incurs the scorn of other family members" (2009, 180). Not to sacrifice a magnificent water buffalo, not to return for a family funeral, not to repay an inherited funeral debt, even when one has migrated abroad, can shatter one's individual and familial honor (*longko*). Participating in funerals, sacrificing livestock, and donating funds for ritual expenses help constitute family relations and ensure that familial honor remains intact.<sup>12</sup>

However, not all Toraja migrants fully grasp the nature and obligations of the Toraja house family. Accustomed to urban nuclear families, some second- and third-generation Toraja migrants have no knowledge of the ancestral house-based family system. For instance, when I asked Rante how she explained her Toraja family and their ritual obligations to her American husband, she said, "He just knows I have a *lot* of cousins, and that's really all I know, too." Other Toraja migrants understand house-based families but don't see the point of upholding *tongkonan* family prestige through engaging in costly rituals in the homeland. Thus some less wealthy migrants deliberately avoid returning to the highlands to avoid these financial obligations. They view house-based families as an economic noose no longer appropriate for today's times.

It is in this realm of contrasting understandings of the nature of the family that we find some of the most revealing and emotionally troubling clashes in understandings between second- and third-generation migrant-tourists and their local kin. The case of Tino Saroengallo illustrates how these clashes in sensibilities can become a source of anxiety, shame, ambivalence, and even anger.

Tino Saroengallo, a Jakarta-born Toraja filmmaker, describes planning his father's funeral in the family's ancestral village as one of the most emotionally haunting experiences of his life. As a youth, Tino's aristocratic Torajan father left the homeland on a scholarship to Leiden, where he met and married a Dutch woman. Together, they returned to Jakarta, where Tino and his sister were born and raised in an affluent home. Throughout Tino's youth, Tino's father held an important title in a celebrated *tongkonan*, and the family routinely returned to the highlands so his father could officiate at house-based rituals. On these trips, they stayed in their comfortable second home, and Tino and his sister were in vacation mode, visiting rituals and kin, enjoying mountain treks, photographing scenery, and making the rounds of tourist sites.

It was not until his father's 2003 death that Tino felt the emotional weight of his cultural heritage—a weight that made him physically dizzy (*pening*). As a freelance cinematographer with slim savings and a family to support, he had hoped to honor his father with a relatively simple highland funeral. For local kin, however, Tino's plans were shame-inducing, given his father's role in the ancestral house. They expected Tino to be fully invested in ensuring that the funeral was sufficiently grand to shield them all from the withering criticisms of rival house-based families. But, as an urban-reared, half-Dutch, second-generation migrant, Tino prioritized the economic needs of his own nuclear family and saw villagers' insistence that he stage an elaborate funeral as extravagant and backward. As Tino told me, on return visits to negotiate ritual details,<sup>13</sup> he experienced mounting resentment and anger over local

house-family members' incessant demands for additional financial infusions. From Tino's perspective, he had already honored his father by agreeing to transport his body back from Jakarta for a highlands funeral. Ultimately Tino felt compelled to write a book about the experience in order to "exorcize" the negative emotions (Saroengallo 2010; see also K. Adams 2015a).

Years later, when I reencountered Tino in the highlands at his father's sister's funeral, he confided that the return visit had reanimated the earlier feelings of ambivalence and anxiety. Tino's emotionally haunting visits to his father's homeland offer insights into how migrants' homeland returns can engender profound emotional ambivalence and emotionally weighty clashes over fundamental understandings of aspects of one's heritage, such as the nature of the family and one's duties to kin.<sup>14</sup>

### **HERITAGE LITE: THE LOVELY DECEMBER FESTIVAL**

One last story illustrates the growing economic, symbolic, and institutional role of Toraja migrant-tourists in the Toraja highlands, and highlights a new avenue for fostering feelings of connection to ancestral heritage. In late 2013, along with several other migrant relatives of my Toraja fieldwork family, I found myself Facebook tagged in an invitation to return for the "Lovely December Festival." This annual event, instituted by the Tana Toraja Regency government in 2006, when tourist visits had plummeted, was initially called the "Longing to Return Home to Toraja" Festival. Promoting the event on social media and in the news, the organizers hoped to convince migrant Torajas to make visits home in order to connect with family members who remained behind, as well as with fellow Torajas and the ancestral homeland. The ultimate aim was to boost hotel bookings and restaurant revenues during the tourism off-season. Homecoming parades, fireworks, contests, and other forms of entertainment, as well as hotel discounts, all added to the enticement strategy. While some locals grumbled about government expenditures for the outsider-oriented festival, it was an overwhelming success, and it is now an annual event that draws thousands of return migrant-tourists each December.

Many of the Toraja migrants I interviewed spoke excitedly about returning for the festival, Facebook-messaging me photos of themselves surrounded by festival fireworks or Christmas decorations. For many migrants contemplating a return to the homeland, the Lovely December Festival offers an opportunity to celebrate the less burdensome dimensions of ancestral heritage. As Lina, a thirty-five-year-old first-generation migrant married to an eastern Indonesian explained, "After my long journey, university in Yogya[karta], living in Jakarta and Bali and now Sengigi Islands, my feel-

ings and thought patterns as a Toraja have changed. I don't want to oblige my kids to get tangled up in Toraja ritual customs, but the Lovely December Festival interests me. There's art, Toraja clothing, bamboo music, traditional dances." Lina's comments suggest part of the appeal of returning for the festival—the opportunity to connect to ancestral heritage, but not too deeply. The connections being forged are all aesthetic yet anesthetized, divorced from the realm of house-family duties and funeral debts. The festival's performances, activities, and displays share characteristics with the ethnic displays at Jakarta's Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park, described at the beginning of this chapter.

As Greg Acciaioli (1985) astutely observed of Suharto-era Indonesia over thirty years ago, in its confrontation with the diverse lifeways of its constituent peoples, the Indonesian state's approach was not to eradicate cultural diversity but to "emasculate" it, transforming complex and potentially troublesome cultural practices into spectacles. Writing of that era, he notes, "regional diversity is valued, honored . . . as long as it remains at the level of display, not belief, performance, not enactment" (1985, 161). For some visiting migrants, like Lina, it is in the sanitized, aestheticized performances of cultural heritage, stripped of elements that evoke emotional ambivalence, that more comfortable bodily and emotional connections to the homeland are found. In short, Lina and other migrants returning for the Lovely December Festival are consuming what I term "Heritage Lite." In the creative, sensory-infused yet emotionally safer touristic borderzone space of the festival, Lina has found a way to periodically reinhabit her ancestral culture.

## CONCLUSION: HOMELAND VILLAGES AS IDENTITY SIRENS

Considering Bruner's triptych of research themes (mobility, migration, and identity) in light of the various returning migrant-tourist experiences recounted here, we see an array of ways of connecting, disconnecting, navigating, and renegotiating the meanings of identity, heritage, and home. However, some preliminary patterns emerge from the interviews and ethnographic research. First, returning migrant Toraja visitors (be they first- or second-generation) who stay in the homes and ritual pavilions of their local kin appear to experience passing moments of *communitas* with their local kin, seemingly forging deeper connections to their heritage than those who reside in the cocooning comfort of hotels. Second, returnees' visits to the ancestral homeland frequently entail emotional ambivalence—whether passing sensations or more profoundly haunting experiences. Yet as the Toraja cases



suggest, the emotions, reactions, and sensibilities about ancestry, home, and belonging prompted by these returns are complex and far from uniform.

Bruner's observation prompted by his return to the Batak village where he had conducted research forty years earlier seems apt here: in our unbounded world, locality has "no monolithic meaning" (E. Bruner 1999, 475). For some Toraja tourist-migrants, the homeland signals a painful identity to be shed, for others it may be a place to somatically experience kin and ancestors, and for still others it is a space for reviving a romanticized version of familial or ethnic identity. The ancestral village may be all of these things—or none of them—at different moments in a single return voyage. However, for those migrants who choose to embark on a return visit, the ancestral village remains, for better or worse, a kind of identity siren, a beacon of possibility, danger, or promise. Many of the Toraja migrants who periodically vacation in the homeland might best be thought of as both home and not-home, or as living "in between" cultures, to use Yamashita's (2003, 99) phrase, forging their own unique spaces and shifting understandings of self and other. They warrant our attention as their lifestyle of navigation between cultures promises to continue in the twenty-first-century world.

## NOTES

1. Others who have written on Indonesia's ethnic theme parks have made similar observations regarding President Suharto's motives for constructing the park (Pemberton 1994, 244; K. Adams 1998, 79).

2. For example, see the migration-oriented studies by Johan Lindquist (2008) and Rachel Silvey (2000; 2006), and the tourism studies by Michel Picard (1996), Jill Forshee (2001), and Stroma Cole (2008).

3. Shinji Yamashita's (2003) article on Japanese female tourists who marry Balinese men they met while vacationing in Indonesia is an exception to this, as is Bruner's (2005a) brief discussion. It was not until the early 2000s that scholars working in other parts of the world began to suggest that migration and tourism might be productively "understood as practices and discourses [that] are intertwined and mutually influence one another" (Intersections of Tourism and Migration Conference, Gdańsk, Poland, April 22–23, 2016. <http://mobility-leisure.edu.pl/?p=572>, accessed January 5, 2017).

4. Recently Indonesia's vice president invited the diaspora to help boost tourism in Malino, another mountainous region of South Sulawesi. See "Vice President Invites Diaspora to Boost Tourism in Malino, S. Sulawesi," *Jakarta Globe*, "<http://jakartaglobe.id/news/vice-president-invites-diaspora-boost-tourism-malino-s-sulawesi/> (accessed September 1, 2017).



5. Although Finnish scholars Soile Veijola and Eeva Jokinen (1994) long ago decried the absences of the body in travel research, it was only a decade later that a growing number of tourism scholars began embracing the body in their studies.

6. I am grateful to Erik Cohen, who first prompted me to consider the dimension of attraction and revulsion in tourist experience.

7. At the time this chapter was written, Sabine Marschall's (2017) edited volume *Tourism and Memories of Home*, which addresses overlapping terrain via a wide range of case studies, had not yet been published.

8. The Regency of Tana Toraja was divided into two separate regencies in 2008.

9. Other Torajas reared away from the homeland feel obliged to visit the various highland Toraja tourist sites when returning with their migrant parents for rituals, as they know their non-Toraja workmates will inquire about these famed Toraja destinations. As one Toraja friend explained, "They don't want to appear dumb about their ancestors' homeland, since everyone in Indonesia has seen Toraja promoted on TV and online." For a fuller discussion, see K. Adams 2015a.

10. *Bali belly* is an expression some tourists use to describe indigestion.

11. Among the Toraja, these named house groups generally refer to physical structures that are periodically refurbished or rebuilt. However, in some instances, the names refer to structures that no longer exist in the physical world. For instance, one house group is named for an ancestral house that was destroyed in a fire long ago and was never rebuilt.

12. See K. Adams 2015a, where I also discuss the relationship between this concept and migrants' considerations about the pros and cons of returning to the homeland for ritual events.

13. Toraja funerals generally occur months or years after the biological death.

14. This chapter is dedicated to Tino Saroengallo, who passed away in July 2018, leaving a rich legacy of films and journalistic works. While battling cancer, Tino completed his final work, an achingly beautiful documentary film about the 2012 funeral of his Toraja aunt, Indo' Toding Sarongallo (*Sudah Selayaknya [A Proper Funeral]*, Jakarta Media Syndication with SAE Institute, Geppetto Productions and Red Rooster Productions). Just months prior to his death, he traveled from Jakarta to the Toraja highlands to premier the film for his ancestral village kin, who were immensely proud of his accomplishments. This was to be his final gift to his rural relatives.